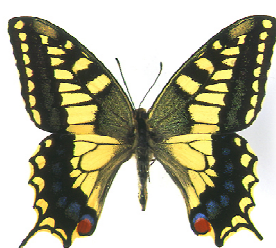


A Possible London Perforating Machine Maker - “Butterfly” Alphabet.

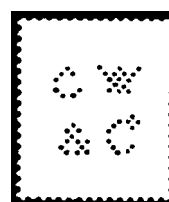
The so-called “Butterfly” alphabet was given this name in a Perfin Society Bulletin article published in June 1993 (Bulletin N^o. 264). More details emerged in the August 1993 Bulletin, and a special feature was made of the ‘series’ in the Perfin Society Stampshow 2000 exhibit. The list was last updated in April 2004 (Bulletin N^o. 329), so over a decade later, now is a good time to publish an up-to-date list!

The original die showing the characteristic “W” that sparked off the study was “CW/&C^o” (C8380.06v). To some it’s a delicate Swallowtail butterfly, to others it’s a ‘keep fit’ fanatic. As I’ve never enjoyed breaking out in a sweat, I know which name I prefer!



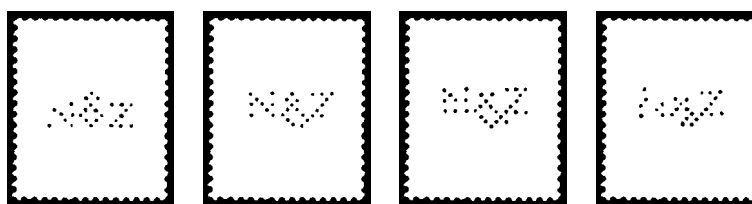
Papilio machaon

1895-1900



C8380.06v

Although many of the dies are scarce, where examples are plentiful (e.g. “N&Z”) considerable variation may be seen in the positioning of the pins forming the pattern. This lends support to the idea that the initialling was done using a die with removable pins set in a regular grid pattern. The postage stamps were probably perforated ‘on request’ and may even have been served ‘over the counter’. *John Mathews* calls this type of die a ‘*Service Die*’, which (for me) seems to conjure up exactly the right sort of image.



The examples above of “N&Z” show the “&” pins ‘all over the place’!

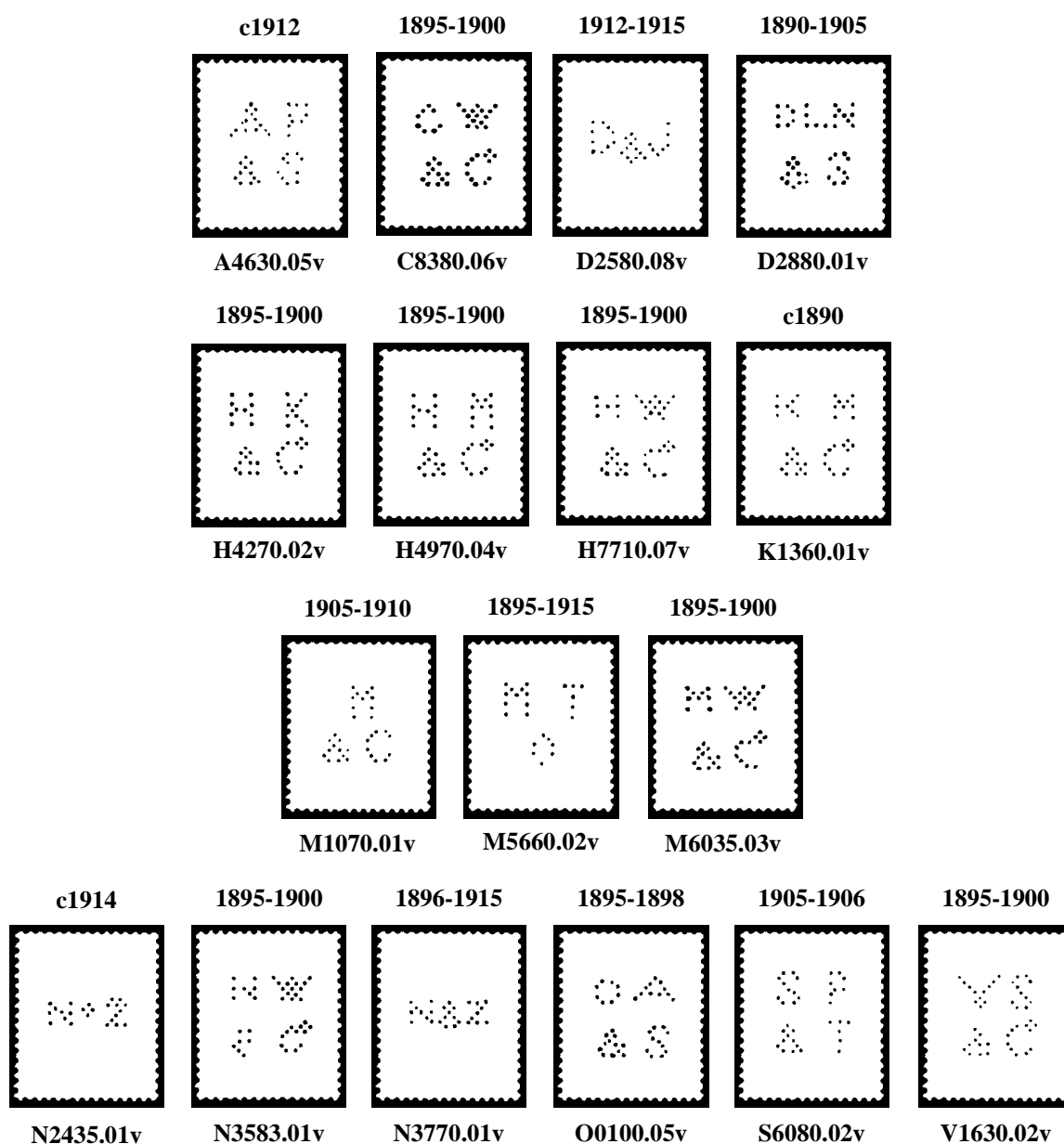
For dies that do not contain a “W”, there is the uncomfortable looking “C” and “C^o” to look out for, as well as a characteristic “S”. All dies now have the suffix ‘v’ added to their catalogue number to warn collectors of ‘variations’, even if only one example is currently known.

Based on dated examples and the stamp issues involved, these ‘Service’ dies were in use for around twenty-five years, say **1890-1915**. The earliest date recorded so far is **10th May 1890** on “DLN/&S”, whereas the latest is **1st April 1914** on the rare, and possibly unique, “N^o2”. This “N^o.2” smacks of a Shell Filling Factory, but we have no post-town clues as to where it was actually used. Legible postmarks are predominantly from London, although examples from Oxford, Sheffield, and Dublin have also been reported.

Just five of the dies from this scarce but interesting group of Perfins have identified users.

- “DLN/∆S” - D L Nisbet & Son, London EC. (Suspected)
- “MT/O” - Morrels (Trustees), Lion Brewery, Oxford. (Suspected)
- “N&Z” - Negretti & Zambra Ltd, London W. (Suspected)
- “OA/∆S” - Olney, Amsden & Sons Ltd, London EC. (Confirmed)
- “VS/∆C⁰” - Vyse, Sons & Co, London EC. (Suspected)

Silhouettes of the dies involved.



This is a brief listing of the dies involved, five of which have identified users.

| | Cat No. | Letters | Die in use | Earliest Date | Latest Date | Postmark |
|-----------|-----------|--------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | A4630.05v | AP/&S | c1912 | --- | --- | --- |
| 2 | C8380.06v | CW/&C ^o | 1895-1900 | 13-Jan-97 | 07-July-99 | London. |
| 3 | D2580.08v | D&J | 1912-1915 | --- | --- | --- |
| 4 | D2880.01v | DLN/&S | 1890-1905 | 10-May-90 | 08-Nov-02 | London. |
| 5 | H4270.02v | HK/&C ^o | 1895-1900 | 02-Feb-98 | --- | London EC. |
| 6 | H4970.04v | HM/&C ^o | 1895-1900 | 14-May-97 | 1900 | London EC. |
| 7 | H7710.07v | HW/&C ^o | 1895-1900 | 29-Aug-96 | 29-Aug-98 | 'NPB', London EC. |
| 8 | K1360.01v | KM/&C ^o | c1890 | --- | --- | --- |
| 9 | M1070.01v | M/&C | 1905-1910 | --- | --- | London. |
| 10 | M5660.02v | MT/O | 1895-1915 | 05-Apr-99 | 28-Oct-07 | Oxford. |
| 11 | M6035.03v | MW/&C ^o | 1895-1900 | 06-Nov-99 | --- | London EC. |
| 12 | N2435.01v | N ^o 2 | c1914 | --- | 01-Apr-14 | --- |
| 13 | N3583.01v | NW/&C ^o | 1895-1900 | 27-July-96 | --- | London. |
| 14 | N3770.01v | N&Z | 1896-1915 | 16-Oct-96 | Dec-09 | London EC. |
| 15 | O0100.05v | OA/&S | 1895-1898 | 05-Feb-97 | 26-Nov-98 | London, and Dublin. |
| 16 | S6080.02v | SP/&T | 1905-1906 | 28-Dec-05 | --- | (Sh)effield. |
| 17 | V1630.02v | VS/&C ^o | 1895-1900 | 1898 | 10-Aug-99 | London. |

Acknowledgements.

My thanks go to all the Perfin collectors who, over the years, have kindly provided stamp details for some of the more elusive dies listed in this study:

Dave Hill, John Mathews, Peter Maybury, Michael Millar (ob), John Nelson, Steve Netten, Mike Oxley (ob), Barry Pawson, Reg Powell (ob), Terry Pusterla, Alan Sandy, Harry Skinner (ob), Arthur Smith (ob), Rosemary Smith, Richard Smolnicki, Gerry Soutar, Stephen Steere, and Terry Wood (ob).

And finally, if you can add anything new to the study, particularly any dies you think I might have missed or possibly not know about, *I'd be pleased to hear from you!*

Roy Gault - *19th May 2015.*